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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2504

September 14, 2009

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The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

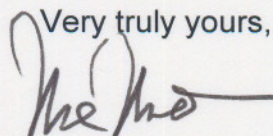
Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you know, inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), is used to determine the annual automatic cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security beneficiaries. For 2009, beneficiaries received a 5.8 percent increase in their benefits. However, the Congressional Budget Office projects that in the third quarter of this year the CPI-W will show a decline from one year ago, due in large part to the decline in energy prices over the past year, and call for no increase in the Social Security COLA for 2010.

The mathematical equations used to calculate the annual Social Security COLA are complex and not easily understood. But Social Security recipients understand how important this yearly adjustment is for paying their bills, many of which continue to rise.

Our nation has a proud tradition of honoring hard work, and Social Security is our pledge to the people of the United States that a lifetime of work should be rewarded with a level of financial security in later years. I urge the Ways and Means Committee to look in to this matter and to keep in mind the needs of America's seniors in the coming year.

With best regards, I remain

Very truly yours,


IKE SKELTON
Member of Congress

IS:jr